

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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O 191731Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5734

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 RABAT 2949

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

EXDIS

FOR UNDER SECRETARY SISCO FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PFOR, MO, SP, SS, MR, AG, US

SUBJECT: SPANISH SAHARA: FOUR-POWER TALKS

REF: STATE 143402

1. I APPRECIATE YOUR THOUGHTFUL APPROACH AND AM IN GENERAL AGREEMENT WITH YOUR IDEA OF DEMARCHES TO THE FOUR COUNTRIES PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH SPANISH SAHARA. AS FOR ANY APPROACH HERE, BELIEVE OUR PURPOSE WILL BE SERVED ONLY IF DEMARCHE IS CAREFULLY NUANCED AND ORCHESTRATED WITH MOVES IN OTHER THREE CAPITALS AND ELSEWHERE. OTHERWISE WE RISK SIGNALING TO KING THAT WE IN EFFECT SUPPORT WHAT HE REGARDS AS SPANISH-ALGERIAN COLLUSION AGAINST HIM, WHICH WOULD COST US HEAVILY IN THIS COUNTRY WITHOUT MOVING MOROCCO APPRECIABLY CLOSER TO AGREEING TO ATTEND FOUR-POWER CONFERENCE::3.

2. I AM IMPRESSED AT THE RAPIDITY WITH WHICH MANY IF NOT ALL BASIC FACTORS IN SPANISH SAHARAN EQUATION SEEM TO BE CHANGING. SPANISH ATTITUDES MOST NOTABLE EXAMPLE, BUT ALGERIAN AND MOROCCAN PERCEPTIONS ALSO SEEM TO BE SHIFTING AROUND. THEREFORE OUR STRATEGY SHOULD BE BASED ON OUR BEST ESTIMATE OF SITUATION AS IT IS LIKELY TO EXIST IN WEEKS AHEAD RATHER THAN ON PAST.

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3. AS I SEE IT, HERE IS WHERE THINGS STAND NOOW:

A. MOROCCANS ARE WAY OUT ON A LIMB BUT KING THINKS HE CAN HACK IT. ARMED CONFLICT WITH SPAIN IS EXCLUDED IN ALL PRESENT RESPONSIBLE GOM THINKING, BUT ARMED CONFLICT WITH ALGERIA (OR AT LEAST WITH GO-SUPPORTED F POLISARIO) IS GRAVE RISK. ALGERIA STRONGER MILITARILY, ALBEIT SOMEWHAT LESS SO IN SAHARA. MOROCCAN OFFICERS WHO LED ARMY SUCCESSFULLY AGAINST ALGERIANS IN 1963 WAR ARE LARGELY GONE, AND NEW MILITARY LEADERSHIP HERE, ALTHOUGH TESTED IN COMBAT IN MIDEAST IN 1973, UNKNOWN QUANTITY. NEVERTHELESS, KING HAS PUBLIC OPINION SOLIDLY BEHIND HIM AND IS PREPARED RISK WAR.

B. QADHAFI'S NEW ENTHUSIASM FOR MOROCCO'S CAUSE PRESUMABLY CAUSING REACTION HERE SOMEWHAT ALONG SAME LINES AS THAT OF DUKE OF WELLINGTON ON REVIEWING RAW RECRUITS FOR PENINSULAR CAMPAIGN ("I DON'T KNOW WHAT EFFECT THEY MAY HAVE UPON THE ENEMY, BUT, BY GOD, SIR, THEY FRIGHTEN ME."). NEVERTHELESS, KING NEEDS ALL THE HELP HE CAN GET AND LIBYA'S ENTRY INTO FRAY HELPS COUNTER ALGERIAN PRESSURE ON MOROCCO.

C. AT SAME TIME, DESPITE TUMULT AND SHOUTING IN PUBLIC DOMAIN, WE ARE WITNESSING A SORT OF "DIALOGUE" BETWEEN TWO OLD ADVERSARIES WHOSE RELATIONS ARE CLOSE AND WHO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER WELL. AS EMBASSY MADRID AND WE HAVE BEEN REPORTING, THERE ARE DIPLOMATIC EXCHANGES GOING ON. WHILE THERE IS MUCH GROUND TO BE COVERED, AND WHILE WE ARE NOT CLEAR AS TO PRECISELY WHAT IS HAPPENING, WE THINK THERE IS REASONABLE CHANCE THAT SOME SORT OF NEGOTIATIONS WILL BEGIN IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE. KING HAS ALREADY TOLD ME HE IS WILLING TO ATTEND FOUR-POWER TALKS UNDER CERTAIN CONTITIONS, ALTHOUGH HE CERTAINLY STILL INSISTS ON AVOIDING GIVING ALGERIA A VETO IN ANY SUCH MEETING. SPANISH HERE, THOUGH LESS CATEGORICAL THAN THEIR FOREIGN MINISTRY, SHARE ITS VIEW THAT THERE WILL BE NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE TOO LONG.

D. IN THIS CONTEXT, I SENSE SOME EVOLUTION IN SPANISH ATTITUDES, WITH THOSE ELEMENTS (NOTABLY THE ARMY) WHICH FAVOR A DEAL WITH MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA BEGINNING TO HAVE THEIR DAY IN COURT. IN MY OPINION ONLY DEAL WHICH EXISTS AT MOMENT IS BETWEEN MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA ON FUTURE PARTITION OF COLONY. HOWEVER, IT SEEMS LIELY THAT COMMUNALITY OF INTEREST FOR SOLUTION BASED ON CONFIDENTIAL

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PARITION MAY BE GROWING BETWEEN SPANISH ON ONE HAND AND MOROCCANS AND MAURITANIANS ON OTHER.

E. IN THIS SITUATION, FOUR POWER MEETING COULD FORCE ALGERIA TO REVEAL ITS MINIMAL OBJECTIVES AND POSSIBLY PRODUCE ALGERIAN AGREEMENT TO RELAX ON SAHARA IN RETURN FOR MOROCCAN RATIFICATION OF 1972 BORDER AGREEMENT. KING HINTED TO ME THAT SUCH A DEAL MIGHT WORK ALTHOUGH PUBLIC OPINION AS REPRESENTED BY POLITICAL

PARTIES IS DEAD SET AGAINST IT. ALTHOUGH IT WOULD COST HIM POLITICALLY, I BELIEVE COULD CARRY OUT, AND SURVIVE, SUCH A DEAL IN CONTEXT OF MOROCCAN "VICTORY" IN SAHARA.

F. IF ALGERIA SHOULD WANT SOME SHARE IN PHOSPHATES, THIS MORE DIFFICULT. PERHAPS IT MIGHT BE SUGGESTED FARTHER DOWN THE PIKE THAT GOM BE WILLING LOOSEN UP PRESENT GOVERNMENT MONOPOLY OVER PHOSPHATE PRODUCTION BY IDENTIFYING A PART FOR "PRIVATE" PARTICIPATION, THIS, IF PROPERLY INTERPRETED, COULD GIVE AN OPENING TO SOME LIMITED ALGERIAN INTERESTS (WHILE ALSO CREATING OPENING FOR U.S. COMPANIES). SUCH A STEP WOULD ALSO SERVE USG CONCERN OVER THIRD WORLD RAW MATERIAL MONOPOLIES POLICIES.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5735

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 RABAT 2949

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

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FOR UNDER SECRETARY SISCO FROM THE AMBASSADOR

4. IT SEEMS TO ME, THEREFORE, THAT FOUR POWER TALKS COULD PRODUCE USEFUL RESULTS. I MUST REEMPHASIZE, HOWEVER, THAT DEMARCHE WHICH DID NOT DEAL WITH SUBSTANCE OF PROBLEM BUT SIMPLY URGED FOUR-POWER TALKS AS LOGICAL PATHWAY TO PEACE WOULD MEET NEGATIVE REACTION HERE. KING IS WORKING HARD ANYWAY, AT PRESENT, ON GETTING NEGOTIATIONS GOING ON TERMS AS FAVORABLE TO MOROCCO AS POSSIBLE, WHILE HIS ADVERSARIES WISH TO BEGIN TALKS WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS. AS NOTED ABOVE HE WOULD, I AM CERTAIN, REGARD UNVARNISHED SUGGESTION FROM US THAT HE ENTER FOUR-POWER TALKS WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS AS SUPPORTING WHAT HE REGARDS AS SPANISH-ALGERIAN COLLUSION AGAINST

HIM, COLLUSION HE FEELS STILL TROUBLESOME EVEN THOUGH SPANISH ATTITUDES MAY BE SHIFTING.

5. BEARING THIS CAVEAT IN MIND, I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT WE PROCEED AS FOLLOWS. U.S., IT SEEMS TO ME, IS IN BEST POSITION TJ MAKE PROPOSAL TO SPAIN. THIS MIGHT BE DONE IN SUCH A WAY AS TO SUGGEST DEFTLY STRATEGY MENTIONED ABOVE AND PERHAPS POINTING OUT THAT PARTITION OF COLONY BETWEEN MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA BEST ULTIMATE SOLUTION.

6. AS FAR AS ALGERIANS ARE CONCERNED, DEMARCHES SHOULD PRESUMABLY BE UNDERTAKEN BY SOMEONE OTHER THAN US. EYGPT, ARAB LEAGUE OR EVEN IRAN ARE POSSIBLE CANDIDATES. (SHAH, WHO CONFIDENTIAL

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FOUND ALGERIANS HELPFUL IN SETTLING HIS CONFLICT WITH IRAQ, MIGHT BE PREPARED TO RETURN THE COMPLIMENT AS A MEANS OF SERVING HIS EGO IF NOT HIS INTERESTS.) ANY DIRECT AMERICAN APPROACH TO GOA WOULD, IT SEEMS TO ME, BE REGARDED WITH CONSIDERABLE SUSPICION AS AN IMPERIALIST MACHINATION.

7. WITH RESPECT TO MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA, WE COULD PERHAPS PLAY USEFUL ROLE BUT IT MIGHT BE PREFERABLE TO HAVE SOMEONE ELSE FURTHER OUT IN FRONT. IN VIEW OF KING'S RECENT DEMARCHE TO FRENCH AMBASSADOR AND ME (RABAT 2698), SOME GOF ROLE MIGHT BE INDICATED (I HAVE NO INDICATION YET OF GOF REACTION TO THAT EVENT). WERE WE TO APPROACH MOROCCANS DIRECTLY, IT WOULD BE BEST IF WE COULD NOTE THAT IN OUR DEMARCHE TO SPANISH WE WERE URGING DESIRABILITY OF REACHING SOLUTION AGREEABLE TO MOROCCANS, WITHOUT OF COURSE MENTIONING PARTITION AS SPECIFIC POSSIBILITY. I BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT AN ARAB BROTHER WOULD BE BETTER ABLE TO PUT MESSAGE ACROSS THAN EITHER THE U.S. OR FRANCE, AND I THEREFORE SUGGEST THAT WE DISCUSS MATTER WITH EGYPTIANS BEFORE PROCEEDING.
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